

Impact of the Mongol Empires

1. Rise

- a. Mongols – epitome of nomadic culture
- b. Superb horsemen and archers
- c. Could have been a world power earlier
 - i. Rivalries between tribes/clans prevent unification
 - ii. Remained isolated
- d. Genghis Khan – Chingiss Khan – “Limitless strength” + “ruler”
 - i. military/organizational skills
 - ii. largest empire ever
 - iii. Mongol invasion 1234
 - iv. Spanned Pacific Ocean to eastern Europe
- e. Military Organization
 - i. Organization based on decimal system
 - 1. Tjumen (Division) – 10,000, Mingghan (Regiment) – 1,000
 - a. Leaders appointed by khan
 - 2. Jaghun (Company) – 100 men, Arben (Squad) – 10 men
 - a. elected by men
 - ii. Efficient/meritocratic approach
 - 1. Leaders chosen for ability/not family relations
- f. Why successful?
 - i. Choices – die in fight, house burned down, burn religious buildings – or give in
 - ii. Ruthless warriors, highly organized, highly mobile
 - iii. 90 miles a day vs. Roman 25 miles a day
 - iv. Bows range of 300 yards
 - v. Armies divided into organized units – light, heavy cavalry + scouts
 - vi. Motivated
 - a. Genghis punished traitors
 - b. Rewarded courage generously
 - vii. Stealthy – network of spies
 - viii. Goals clear – surrender or entire village destroyed
 - ix. Adept at cultural borrowing
- g. Military innovations
 - i. armor made of lacquered wood and silk
 - ii. use of feints and flanking maneuvers
 - iii. concentrated light rations for troops on horseback
- h. Strategy
 - i. When coming up to city, promised to spare inhabitants
 - ii. If they disagreed, they’d slaughter every human and animal – destruction total
 - iii. Rapid success and brutality spread quickly
 - iv. Unparalleled military achievements and ruthlessness
- i. Split into hordes – independent empires
 - i. Golden Horde – conquered Russia
 - ii. Kublai Khan ruled China
 - iii. Destroyed cities, ruthless warriors

2. Largest single empire in human history

- a. Period of peace – Pax Mongolia

3. Conquered Areas

- a. Once settled developed

- i. Law code

- 1. Yasa – borrowed from several cultures

- ii. Written language

- 1. Turkik language of Uighur

- iii. New religious practices

- 1. Sometimes adopted religions of those they conquered

- a. Buddhism and Islam

- iv. Better technology – social and cultural advancements

- 1. Used paper currency taken from China

- 2. Postal system – message carried on horseback – yam – Pony Express

- b. After death of Genghis Khan – brief period of calm while sons organized holdings

- c. Under Ogodei – son – extended into China/Korea and then to Eastern Europe

- d. Failure in Eastern Europe – Ogodei's nephew Batu led

- i. overextended – too far from home

- ii. unfamiliar terrain – forests, mountains

- iii. fortresses/castles slowed advance

- iv. Batu forced to return after Ogodei's death

- v. Did conquer Russia and parts of Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania

- a. Called Golden Horde – “orda” = “camp”

- e. Failure in Japan – 1274/1281

- i. Violent storms

- f. Khubilai Khan – shifted power from Domain of the Great Khan to Yuan Empire – China

- i. New Dynasty called Yuan – 1278-1369

- a. Policy of segregation between Mongols and Chinese

- 1. Marriage forbidden

- b. Abolishing examination system for choosing government officials

- 1. Often appointed non-Chinese for posts

- c. Extended the Grand Canal linking cities

4. Fall

- a. Hardly lasted 3 to 4 generations

- b. Not able administrators

- c. Overspending led to inflation

- d. “One can conquer an empire on horseback, but one cannot govern that empire from horseback.”

- e. After Kublai Khan died, leadership weak/ineffective

- i. Rivalry among successors destabilized – who would be successor?

- ii. empire divided among generals

- f. Russia overthrown by rise of Russia

- g. Ottoman Turks replaced them in Asia

4. Impact

- a. Once domain established – relative peace – Pax Mongolica
 - i. notion of peacefulness an exaggeration
- b. Allowed for exchange of goods, ideas, culture from different regions
 - i. Biggest impact – conduit for cultural exchange
- c. Civilization based on territory and conquest, not culture
 - i. culture of killing, maiming, destroying
 - ii. Mongol Empire, not Mongol Civilization
 - iii. In many cases, stifled growth
 - iv. Illiterate – no need for arts/sciences
 - v. Mongol religion – no place among great faiths
- d. Silk Road flourished
 - i. Cities like Samarkand, with oases, bazaars, markets became commercial centers
- a. Merchants, travelers, pilgrims, missionaries all passed through
- d. Some assimilated
 - i. Persia became Muslim
- e. China – Kublia Khan
 - i. dismissed Confucian scholars
 - ii. forbade marriage between Mongols and Chinese
 - iii. Wouldn't allow Chinese to learn Mongol language
 - iv. Key...not allowed to Mongolize – kept own culture
 - 1. 1368 – kicked out – Ming Dynasty under traditional Chinese practices
- f. Major consequences
 - 1. Russia – conquered by illiterate Mongols – didn't unify, develop like European neighbors
 - 2. World trade, cultural diffusion, awareness
 - a. Touched nearly all major civilizations
 - b. World would never again be disconnected
- g. Summary effects
 - 1. nations formed and destroyed
 - 2. nations had social, cultural and political characteristics shaped by decades of rule
 - 3. much of Eurasian landmass united/connected by political, economic, cultural links
- h. Contrasted with other civilizations
 - a. No Golden Age, but larger
 - b. Usually slowed cultural developments
 - c. Culture shared...but it wasn't their culture